

Read Job 1

Then the LORD said to Satan, "Behold, all that he has is in your power , only do not put forth your hand on him." So Satan departed from the presence of the LORD. Job 1:12

There is some important theology in here that I feel compelled to cover. First of all, Satan has been cast out of Heaven and no longer has access to it. This happened before the Fall, and we learn about it in Isaiah 14:12 and Revelation 12:7-9. God is Holy and does not dwell in the presence of sin. If sinful people cannot enter into Heaven, how can the devil do so? The interaction between God and Satan came during a time of worship by men on earth, not a time of angels presenting themselves before God in Heaven. "Sons of God" in Genesis 6 is translated the same way here in Job 1, and refers to the godly offspring of Adam's son, Seth.

So Job has some rough circumstances in his life. In spite of all of those difficulties, he never lost his faith in God. Satan was given the opportunity to take everything away from Job except for his life. When everything was gone, Job praised God. You may be undergoing some trials in your life, and Job gives us some information that I hope is of help to you. Finding yourself in trial is a good thing. It means that you are living a life that concerns Satan. I'm not excited about the attacks of the enemy, but I'd rather be someone that concerns Him, than someone he can ignore. Also, God did not bring about the trial, but He did allow it in Job's life. **If God has allowed trial in your life, it's not for the purpose of failure. God allows into our lives only what we can handle. If we fail in the trial, it's not because the trial was too difficult, but our resolve was weak. How are you speaking to God in your trials? Are you shaking your fist at God and asking "Why?" Or are you thanking Him for the blessings that still exist in your life and asking "What?" Ask Him what you are supposed to be learning as a result of this time in your life. It's the trials, not the easy days, which have grown me closer to my Lord.**

Read Job 2

Then they sat down on the ground with him for seven days and seven nights with no one speaking a word to him, for they saw that *his* pain was very great. Job 2:13

The longer I'm married, the more I realize that men and women are different. There have been times I knew that my wife had some sort of problem going on. I know I'm supposed to listen to her, so I ask her what's wrong and listen to her problem. That's a great deposit in the marriage bank, because she knows I'm taking the time to listen to her. However, I had to learn that when she shares these problems, she's not always looking for a solution, at least not right away. She wants me to listen, love her, and sympathize with her. When I try to solve the problem within a few moments of discovering it, she thinks that I have not really listened to her.

If you thought Job had problems in chapter one, suddenly chapter two makes it worse. Now his health has deteriorated, along with the loss of his possessions and children. Job's wife is no great source of comfort, as she believes that Job's faith is irrelevant. She

reasoned that if God really loved Job, these bad things wouldn't be happening to him. In fact, God did love Job and was very proud of the life that he lived. So eventually we see three of Job's friends show up to be with him. And for seven days they did nothing but sit next to him in silence. Not wanting to bother him, not wanting to solve the problem, but just showing up so that Job would know he wasn't alone. **How do you come to people in crisis? Do you tell them that you know what they're going through? If you haven't gone through it, don't say it. Don't feel that you have to solve every problem. As a minister, I've learned that when people come and share their struggles with me, they're looking for a sympathetic ear more than a 3-step program on how to fix their problems. Just be there. If you don't know what to say, then tell them that. Ask the Holy Spirit to show you when to be silent and when to speak.**

Read Job 3

Why is light given to him who suffers, And life to the bitter of soul, Job 3:20

My pastor was recently telling us how he threw himself a pity party. You know what a pity party is, don't you? That's when you put on a sad face, and you tell people around you how terrible your situation is, and you're waiting for the big "Awww." Pastor said his problem is that when he throws a pity party he can never get anyone else to come. I've thrown a few of those unattended pity parties myself in the past. Do you know why people don't come? Because there's no cake, no Mountain Dew, and no party games. We need Christians to trade pity parties for praise parties!

Here we start to see Job feeling the effects of his situation. Remember in Chapter 2, his three friends come and sit by him, silent, for seven days just to mourn with him. Eventually, it appears that this environment of mourning got to Job. He begins a lament of the day he was born, and asks why the suffering soul has light and breath. Remember, he lost all his possessions, his children, and now his health. He's having a bad time in his life. Without condemning Job too much, He was ignoring his own statements. When he lost everything, he was able to say, "Blessed be the name of the Lord." Now, he's feeling that the Lord has completely forgotten about him, and has left him to rot. He knew the truth about the goodness of God, but it was hard to remember in the midst of his suffering. **Do you feel forgotten by God? Are there times you wonder if He is hearing your prayers and cares about your situation? If you belong to Him through the blood of Jesus Christ, then He will never leave you or forsake you. However, that doesn't mean times of difficulty and trial won't come. Just rest in Him. Look for the blessings that still exist in your life. Ask God to bring the trial to a close, as you give the situation completely to Him.**

Read Job 4

Remember now, who ever perished being innocent? Or where were the upright destroyed? Job 4:7

I know our country says that you are innocent until proven guilty, but I don't think we always see it that way. If I see a guy go on trial for murder, I usually think, "Well if he's on trial, then he's the guy." I expect to see the man convicted, because the evidence led

police to him in the first place. However, as DNA technology improves, I have seen stories of people being released from prison because the DNA from the crime doesn't match the convicted perpetrator. I think most of us think that a person who is convicted got what he had coming, and those who are found innocent probably lawyered their way out of jail.

Job's friend Eliphaz, made a lot of assumptions too. Job is being punished, so he must be receiving it for some sin he was guilty of. There are a lot of problems with this assumption. The first is that he claimed to know exactly what God was doing. There are some times that we can speak fairly clear on what God is doing. You have a friend who needs Jesus, and is under heavy conviction, and you know God is working on his/her heart. It's much harder to speculate when natural disasters come or people pass away. Was there some sin that caused it? We can't know. Later in the gospels, Jesus will tell a story about several who died in the collapse of a tower. He tells people not to assume their death was a result of sin in their lives. Standing on the outside, we can see that Eliphaz was wrong: this was a trial in Job's life, but it was not the result of any sin that he had committed or ignored. **So what do you need to take from this? It's similar to the lesson from Chapter 2. When you don't know what to say, don't say anything. A believer has a responsibility to listen for the Holy Spirit and seek answers to God's actions through Him. Do you need to seek the Holy Spirit over the words of man? Do you need to repent for trying to be the voice of God, instead of allowing the Holy Spirit to do His work unhindered in the life of those around you?**

Read Job 5

But as for me, I would seek God, and I would place my cause before God; Job 5:8

I'm sure our kids are the only ones who deal with this, but we do have some sibling infighting at times. We have developed a system for how our kids are to handle these situations. If my son is bothering one of his sisters, his sister is to ask him to stop. If he stops then great, but if he doesn't she is supposed to come to her mom or I. The problems usually arise when a child chooses to fight instead of letting Mom or Dad handle it. When we hear a fight going on, I ask what happened. Then I ask the child, "What should you have done instead of fighting?" I wait for them to tell me that they should have given the situation to Mom or Dad, which they know is the right thing to do.

Job's friend is telling Job what he would do in this situation. Eliphaz is apparently concerned that Job is not bringing his situation before God. We do read that Job didn't curse God, but we don't have any record of Job going to God and seeking an explanation. He moves from trying to have a good attitude to suddenly cursing the day he was born. We need to be sure that we are bringing the situations of our life before God. **Are you talking about the troubles of your life with everyone but God? Do you look for human resolutions before you seek God's? Have you just prayed in passing, or have you really and fervently brought your concerns before God? Stop looking for sympathy from people. Seek God today, and trust Him to care for the situations in your life.**

Read Job 6

How painful are honest words! But what does your argument prove? Job 6:25

I've really gotten involved in watching this current season of "America's Got Talent." One of the first things I realized is that America hasn't got as much talent as they think they do. People compete against each other with a wide range of abilities from sword-swallowing to singing. There are three judges, and much like American Idol, people don't like the British judge. However, when I listen to Piers Morgan, I have to admit he is probably the most helpful of all the judges. He tells people exactly how it is. He tells what he thinks they did wrong or right, and is usually blunt about it. But as I listen, I always hear him tell the performer how they can improve. He doesn't just say, "You stink", and that's it. He will tell them of a performance they did before that he liked, or an element they could add. He sometimes gets booed for his straightforward answers, but you can't deny that he is telling the truth.

I realize at this point, it seems like the book of Job is getting a bit redundant. That is part of the honesty of the book. Have you ever gone round and round with some of your friends, not getting anywhere but not quitting the argument either? Job certainly did and as he responds to the words he was given, he admits that honest words are painful. I think he is referring to the straightforward way his friend has been talking to him, but Job asks what the argument proves. He says his friends are beating him up and then going no further. They aren't providing a resolution, but they are simply telling him that he's wrong. Job has a point. **As we walk with God, He communicates with us. Sometimes directly by the Holy Spirit and other times through fellow believers. God's purpose is that you would apply what you hear to your life. He doesn't just want you to feel bad and that be the end. Our feelings of conviction or remorse should be turned to a desire to do something different. God's purpose isn't to make you feel bad, but to change you for the better. How are you responding to God's calls for change in your life?**

Read Job 7

What is man that You magnify him, and that You are concerned about him, Job 7:17

NFL quarterback Peyton Manning is the king of commercials. He's on TV every other minute it seems. He was in a commercial a couple of years ago making light of football fans. Obviously he knows what it's like to be hawked by fans, and in the commercial he played a fan of ordinary people. One scene shows him in the grocery store, begging a stock boy to sign his watermelon. Another scene shows Peyton giving high fives to waiters as they leave a restaurant, while Peyton yells out, "Good job, nice salad bar today." The commercial works because everyone knows that Peyton isn't really a fan of the little guy and that's what makes it funny.

God is a fan of the little guy. He's a fan of the person who thinks he/she has no fans. Before you get too down on Job, think about how you might have reacted in his situation. Towards the end of this depressing Job monologue, he makes a statement about why God

would be concerned with man. Job has just pointed out that man is just going to die, but eternal God will keep on going. Why does God care about us? What value do we have in His eyes? God cares about us because He created us. Our value comes from what God thinks about us, not anybody else. Job was probably troubled that his friends all thought he was in some great sin. **Have you forgotten how important you are to God? Do sometimes feel that others are important to God, but you're not very high on His list? Nothing you can do will make God love you any more or less than he does right now. Doubts about God's love for us, often come when we have sin in our life that we have refused to deal with. What do you need to deal with to draw closer to God?**

Read Job 8

If you are pure and upright, Surely now He would rouse Himself for you And restore your righteous estate . Job 8:6 I try not to waste too many of my TV watching hours on prosperity preachers, but sometimes I will stop and watch. For years I could never figure out what was really bothering me about them. They were talking about Jesus, but they seemed to be emphasizing a good life on earth over a good life in Heaven. Then one day it clicked: why should we be promised possessions, great relationships, and safety from injury when Jesus didn't get those promises? He owned little to nothing, had many difficult relationships because of the truth He preached, and He suffered a great injury on our behalf. If Jesus showed up at one of these preacher's conferences, would they attempt to improve His life? Difficulty can show up in the life of the righteous.

Now we are hearing from another of Job's friends, Bildad. Does God raise up to defend the righteous? We have certainly seen it in the history of Israel. When they had a righteous king, like Jehosaphat, God responded to their difficult situation. God has protected Job in ways he doesn't know. Even though he is suffering physically, Job's life will be spared because of the watchcare of God. God's desire in this trial is that Job would come closer to Him. The loss of his possessions didn't turn God away, and really the physical suffering didn't either. It was a combination of both that caused Job to start asking serious questions about who God is. **The Bible says we should be thankful people (1 Thess 5:18). Even in the midst of your trials, you need to look for those things you can still thank God for. Maybe you don't have a lot of money, but compared to many people around the world, you are very wealthy. Did you eat today? Do you have a car? Do you have two? Do you have a house? Are you and/or your kids healthy? Find those things you can thank God for, and do it. Maybe if Job had chosen to thank God for what he could, this book wouldn't go on so long with arguments back and forth with his friends.**

Read Job 9

Though I am righteous, my mouth will condemn me; though I am guiltless, He will declare me guilty. Job 9:20

At my sister's house one day, my niece ran up to me and said that my son hit her. That wasn't out of the realm of possibility for him, so I went downstairs to see what was going on. He was playing and I called him over. I told him that his niece said he hit her, and

Tyler was irate. He was adamant that he hadn't touched her and I was inclined to believe him. I told my sister I didn't think he hit his niece. She asked why, and I said that he wasn't hiding (which he's prone to do when he knows he's in trouble), and he seemed totally shocked that I had accused him of hitting her. I can tell when my kids are guilty or not.

Job is pretty confident he didn't do anything wrong to bring on his tragedy, but he's not sure if it matters. He says that God is a judge who cannot be argued with. That's true. God's judgments will not be overturned. A lost person will not argue God out of the eternal judgment that awaits him or her. Again, Job's mistake is believing that he is being punished, instead of realizing the point is to be strengthened by adversity. We cannot allow ourselves to take times of despair and say that God is unconcerned with us. God's purpose is always to bring us more into conformity with His image. **A preacher once said "God wants you holy more than he wants you happy." Do you desire holiness or happiness from God? James says that we are to consider trials as joy, because the purpose of the trial is to make more mature Christians. Happiness is fleeting and fickle. Joy is a choice that we make to believe that even in the dark times, God has not abandoned us. Job felt abandoned. Do you feel that way? Talk to God about it. Be honest about your feelings as you speak to Him today.**

Read Job 10

I loathe my own life; I will give full vent to my complaint; I will speak in the bitterness of my soul. Job 10:1

I like the story about the monk who joined a monastery and took a vow of silence. After 10 years his superior called him in and said, "Do you have anything to say?" The monk replied, "Food bad." After another 10 years the monk had another chance to voice his thoughts. He said, "Bed hard." Another 10 years went by and he was called before his superior again. When asked if he had anything to say, he responded, "I quit." The superior said, "Doesn't surprise me a bit. You've done nothing but complain since you got here."

Is there anything wrong with voicing a complaint? No. We've all done it at one time or another, but what is the motivation behind our complaints? The monk was motivated by a desire for better conditions. In this chapter we see Job motivated by bitterness. When you allow feelings of pity and anger (bitterness) to control your speech, your complaints turn into complaining. Job needed to check his emotions before he spoke. **How about you? Do you speak with your emotions in check? Or do you give full vent to your frustrations as you talk with others? If someone has a valid complaint about an issue, I'm willing to listen. But if they approach me with bitter complaining, I am immediately on the defensive and less willing to listen. Ask God to help you deal with bitterness in your life. Otherwise, just like Job, it will permeate your soul and your speech.**

Read Job 11

If iniquity is in your hand, put it far away, And do not let wickedness dwell in your tents; Job 11:14 In Missouri we dealt with a very real meth problem. The drug is available just about anywhere and it's often cooked up right in the dealer's home. The problem with that is, it's a toxic situation. Many homes have exploded due to the ignition of these toxic fumes. And despite the danger, people live in these houses, sometimes with their children, placing all their lives in danger. When I watch a hazmat team walk into these houses with full protective suits on, I realize how dangerous the environment is for the people living there.

In this chapter we have another of Job's friends, Zophar, speaking to him. I like this guy. I'm not sure if he believes Job did something wrong or not, but Zohpar's message is IF a person is participating in known sin, he should quit it. His point is that God is willing to bless the repentant man. Zophar says IF Job has sin in his hands or in his home, to get rid of it. That's a call all of us should be willing to evaluate in our lives. **Are your hands working for God or yourself? Even selfishness is a sin, because you are elevating yourself above Almighty God. Is sin in your hands, perhaps as you steal or hurt another person? Is there sin in your dwelling? You may not own a tent, but you live somewhere. Is sin a welcome visitor in your home? You've got to be a bouncer at the door protecting yourself and your children of influences that can come in and weaken your resolve against sin. You may not need a hazmat team in your house, but a house that allows sin is toxic to your relationship with Jesus Christ.**

Read Job 12

The tents of the destroyers prosper, and those who provoke God are secure, whom God brings into their power. Job 12:6

I have often heard people thank God for giving them the ability to work. We thank God for giving us functioning limbs, or a functioning mind, or some ability by which we are able to work and make a living. But as I thought about this later, I realized there are plenty of people who make a good living who never thank God. For every Albert Pujols who praises Jesus as his source of ability on the baseball field, there are several who praise themselves for their ability. There are millionaires who have created their fortune by marketing and selling sin. Why are they blessed in their work? The fact is, God gives everyone the ability to work, it's just that some praise Him for it and some don't. Some use their ability in a godly way, and some don't.

Job wants to make a point to his friends here. They say that if he would repent everything would be ok. Job points out that there are many people who live in opposition to God who have prospered and not befallen the kind of circumstances that Job has. He has a point. Have you ever looked at non-Christians and envied them because they get to do what they want, when they want? I'll admit that I've had my moments. But then I realize that everything they rely on is fleeting. Wealth is fleeting. Ability is fleeting. Family is fleeting. **Do you need to ask God's forgiveness for envying a fallen world? Remember who you belong to, and He didn't promise your life on this earth would**

be easy with Him, but it would have a purpose. The life He promises is beyond the pettiness of this world and will bring happiness and joy far beyond anything the most selfish sinner could enjoy here on earth.

Read Job 13

How many are my iniquities and sins? Make known to me my rebellion and my sin. Job 13:23

People often ask how you can tell if someone is truly saved, especially a new convert. I led a young lady to Christ recently, and I knew she understood the answers, but I was unsure if she understood the relationship. She came to me two weeks later and admitted that she still had sin in her life, and she was worried that accepting Jesus should have ended that. I call this the two week question I often get from new believers; "If I accepted Jesus, why do I still choose sin?" Because you're human. A Christian who admits they struggle with sin is much more admirable to me than a Christian who believes he or she just really doesn't deal with sin anymore.

As Job continues debating his friends, it's clear that he has a good understanding of God. He knows that God is the One to trust in all situations, but the hardships in his personal life make that truth a little foggy in his mind. Previously Job said there was no sin in his life. Now he is asking God to show him if he is in sin. This is the better response. This is the response that allows God's Holy Spirit to start teaching the lesson. Job was not suffering due to sin, but due to righteousness. His righteous life was being put to the test and it was his responsibility to continue to choose righteousness even as he suffered. **What is your sin? What is your rebellion? Are you fully aware of the trouble spots in your spiritual life? Many Christians believe they are ok because they never ask God to show them their sin. Today prepare yourself to deal with whatever He says. I have asked God to show me my sin and been surprised at what He brought to light. You might think ignorance is bliss, but I assure you ignorance is never a blessing. Choose to deal with your sin today and live closer to your God.**

Read Job 14

But man dies and lies prostrate. Man expires, and where is he? Job 14:10

This is the big question: what happens to us when we die? Adrian Rogers tells the story of a man that passed away in his church. As his death approached the man gave Adrian a tape and told him that he wanted it played at his funeral instead of Adrian preaching. The pastor agreed and when the day of the funeral came, there was music and remembrances and then Dr. Rogers walked up to the podium with a tape player. He set it in front of the microphone and hit play as he took his seat. Soon people heard, "Hey everyone! It's me Charlie! And I'm up here in Heaven having a great time with my Lord!" The man even in his dying days had laid out his hope for his eternity with Jesus. Adrian said it's the only example he knows of where a dead man preached his own funeral!

What would possess a man who is dying to record a tape of hope for others? Faith. I can't see Heaven. I can't touch Heaven. I haven't even seen Jesus face to face, yet I trust Him

with my life. Why? Because there is only room for so many coincidences in a man's life. After a while, you realize there is a purpose to the events that go on around you everyday. As I began my walk with Jesus, there were times I wondered if He was really there. However, He has confirmed it on a number of occasions, and as a result I'm not afraid of death. It will not be the end of my existence, but truly the beginning of it. I KNOW that when I die, I will live with God forever. Not because of the good stuff I do. Not because I pray. Not because I go to church. It's only because Jesus Christ has offered forgiveness of sins and eternity with Him and I have accepted His gift. **Do you wonder where you'll be? When it comes to your eternity are you in the "know so" crowd or the "hope so" crowd? My hope is in Jesus. Where's yours?**

Read Job 15

What do you know that we do not know? *What do you understand that we do not?* Job 15:9

I have learned in my tenure as a human being that a criticism wrapped in an insult gets you nothing but a fight. I was dealing with someone in my church recently who needed to make some improvements in his ministry area. I knew he had been doing it for a long time, so I told him how much I appreciated all that he does and that I know that his job is not an easy one (which is all true). Then I gave him my suggestion and told him that it would make things easier for him and others who benefit from his service. He thanked me for the encouragement and said that he would make the adjustments. I have to admit, there have been times in my life I gave suggestions without tact and found that the situation was worsened.

Well Eliphaz begins speaking again, and it's clear to me that as Job spoke, Eliphaz wasn't listening. As soon as he saw that Job was not repenting and agreeing with his three friends, Eliphaz stopped listening and started thinking about what HE wanted to say. Eliphaz wasn't willing to admit that Job might be right. Instead, Eliphaz was more concerned with winning the argument than with helping Job. **Have you ever been preparing to speak instead of trying to listen? Do you give criticism or constructive criticism (don't answer that too quickly)? I have learned enough to admit when others around me are right and I am wrong. Really none of these guys knew what was going on, including Job. Sometimes you have to admit your ignorance, and keep asking "What?" instead of "Why?"**

Read Job 16

I too could speak like you, If I were in your place. I could compose words against you And shake my head at you. Job 16:4

I had the difficult task of helping with the funeral of a small infant recently. All I had to do was take care of sound and technical things, but it was still difficult. As the grandmother and mother looked at that little life inside that tiny casket, I just stood with them. What do you say? My wife and I have lost two children, both during the pregnancy. It was painful to lose Kaler and Cody that way, but I can't imagine if they had been big enough for me to hold them. I know the pain that family experienced yesterday.

And I know that no words can replace the dreams and plans that a parent has for a child that is now gone.

Job tells his friends that they need to walk in his shoes. He says he could vilify anyone of them if they were going what he's going through. It's not tough to tell someone they're wrong, but Job is saying that these guys have no idea what Job is going through. Based on their arguments (and Job's) it's pretty clear that ignorance was abounding. When his friends showed up and were simply silent for a whole week, which helped Job. He didn't need their words, just their company. **What could they say anyway? Do you feel compelled to offer words to those in difficulty? Too often I see people who claim to know what a family or individual is going through, even when they clearly do not. When people are in grief, your words are likely to do very little. People need to know you care. Your words don't prove that you care as much as your presence does. Who do you need to be a comfort to? Are you ready to do it without trying to solve their problem?**

Read Job 17

Nevertheless the righteous will hold to his way, and he who has clean hands will grow stronger and stronger. Job 17:9

Righteousness gets a bum wrap. When a Christian talks about righteousness, we understand it is something that comes from God alone through Christ, having a "rightness" before God. When an unbeliever talks about righteousness, they usually refer to self-righteousness. Self-righteousness happens when we begin to believe that we deserve the blessings we receive from God, and those who don't receive similar blessings are not loved on the same level as we are.

Job says two things about people who are righteous as a result of God's work in their life: they have a life that they can hold to, and if they resist sin they will grow stronger. The implication is that they will grow stronger in their relationship with God. It's becoming clear that Job doesn't look at himself as this righteous man, based on his current circumstances. **What about you? Are you continuing to live a life of righteousness, or are you willing to take a break from God? Are you working to resist sin, knowing that it will cause you to grow stronger in your relationship with God? These are two evidences of God-righteousness over self righteousness.**

Read Job 18

Surely such are the dwellings of the wicked, and this is the place of him who does not know God." Job 18:21

What are the characteristics of a good basketball player? He should be quick and able to handle the ball well. He has a great jump shot and the ability to take the ball straight to the rim. He knows how to pass the ball and plays tough defense all the time. I think many of us would say this is a description of a good basketball player. But what about Dennis Rodman? Dennis certainly had his problems, but he was one of the most dominating forces on the basketball court. Not because he did any of the things that I mentioned

already. He did one thing: rebound the ball. If someone took a shot, he was there to collect the miss. NBA scouts say that you don't have to be a complete player to be a professional, but you need to have one thing that you do at a professional level. Despite all the Rodman was poor at, his rebounding skills made him a valuable player.

It's easy to discount Rodman when I make up my own list. The same thing goes for Job. Bildad is taking his turn in speaking to Job again. He is very agitated, feeling that Job is claiming that his friends are all idiots. Bildad responds by saying certain life events show a person doesn't know God. Bildad says that person has terrors at every step (v.11), he has disease (v.13), his resources dry up (v.16), and he has no children (v.19). This is a description of Job's circumstances that Bildad has made into a description of a godless person. **Do you assume that circumstances prove the depth of a person's relationship with God? Do our two miscarriages prove God's anger at us in those moments? Are you evaluating the lives of others, only based on what you see? What about the hours that you're not around them? Jesus probably appeared guilty to many. He had no possessions, He had strained relationships, church leadership had a low view of Him, and He was not protected from death. Many assumed that meant He was not the Messiah, when in fact He was following the very plan that the Father had for His life. What assumptions have you made regarding other people?**

Read Job 19

As for me, I know that my Redeemer lives, and at the last He will take His stand on the earth. Job 19:25

I have been dealing with a very tough loss for my favorite college football team, the Missouri Tigers. I felt depleted watching us lose a game in the middle of "our year". We've been waiting for "our year" for decades. It's demoralizing as a fan. But it's just a game. I read about a 23 year-old man from Paraguay who was so distraught after watching his favorite soccer team lose, that he doused himself in kerosene and lit himself on fire. The difference between that man and myself is that I realize there is more to life than sports (and I hate fire).

Job realized there is more to life than life. He was in a bad situation. He was mad at God, mad at his friends, and mad at his family. However, he knew he had a Redeemer. As you read the latter verses of chapter 19, you might think it was a New Testament passage. Believers in the Old Testament were saved in the same way as we are today: through the blood of Jesus. The difference is they believed in a Savior who would come and we believe in a Savior who has come. Job even mentions that he will see his Redeemer in his own body. He knew all about the resurrection body before 1 Thessalonians ever mentioned it. He knew that His Redeemer was alive and that one day when this life is over, that there is more to come. **Are you getting too shackled to this life? Do the ups and downs of life cause you to forget that your Redeemer lives? As believers, we live because He lives. There is no greater confidence for us than the empty tomb to bring assurance that better things are in store for us. Maybe they won't be until after death, but eternity is a substantial amount of time to make up for difficulties in the here and now. Praise Jesus today that He lives and that you live through Him!**

Read Job 20

Because he knew no quiet within him, he does not retain anything he desires. Job 20:20

A rich industrialist was disturbed to see a fisherman sitting lazily by his boat in the afternoon. "Why aren't you out there fishing?", he asked. The fisherman replied, "Because I've caught all the fish I need for today." The industrialist told him he should go back out and catch more fish than he needed. When the fisherman asked why, the industrialist replied, "You could earn more money and buy a better boat so you could go deeper and catch more fish. You could purchase better equipment and eventually a fleet of boats and earn more money." The fisherman replied, "Then what would I do?" "You could sit down and enjoy life", the rich man said. The fisherman said, "What do you think I'm doing now?"

In this chapter, Zophar comments on the craziness of living for this life. You chase things, and they vanish. Your treasure on earth doesn't translate into treasure for eternity. He is making the case to Job that wicked people find themselves losing everything because their triumph is short (v.5). In a way, Zophar is saying that Job has sin and that his time of triumph came to an end. Job doesn't appear to be a man who was discontent. He had much because God had given him much. But when he lost it all, he was content to say "Blessed be the name of the Lord". **What about you? Zophar says that discontent people know no quiet within themselves. No matter what they have, it isn't good enough. You need a better car. You need a better home. You need a better spouse. People's lives, families, and careers are often thrown off track by discontentment. The only area of our life that we should refuse contentment is with the sin in our life. Do you need to seek God's contentment in your life? Are you thanking Him for His blessings, or has your desire for more caused you to miss what you already have?**

Read Job 21

Who will confront him with his actions, and who will repay him for what he has done? Job 21:31

I have only known the boys in my small group for a couple of weeks, but already they are very comfortable with me. I think the main reason is because I have invited ANY question they want to ask and then I answer it truthfully. We were recently talking about courage and making choices that are difficult, and they asked me for my own personal examples. I told them of the church I served where a man was living in sin as he openly lied and gossiped about the church and myself. Many people in that church admitted that the man was a problem and should be dealt with. The reason the issues remained, is because no one would stand face to face with this man and show him his sin. It wasn't for the purpose of evil, but for the hope of restoration in his life that I shared with him the things he was doing.

As Job talks about the ways of the wicked, he has the concern that we all have: "Is _____ going to get what he/she deserves?" We are constantly concerned about whether others are going to get away with more than we do. Job asks who will "confront" the wicked with their actions. Literally the passage means, "who will declare his ways to his face". That's pretty strong language, but it's exactly what God will do. The Holy Spirit speaks softly to us in this life. But one day, standing before the Great White Throne, Jesus will declare your ways to your face. Stop worrying about others; are you prepared to stand before that throne? I've known Christians who are overly concerned with lost people "getting what they deserve." **Do you realize that you're not getting what you deserve? Jesus paid it all, not us. We still deserve Hell because of the sinful actions of our lives, but Jesus' blood has paid the price for the repentant sinner. One day I will stand before Jesus as He sits on that throne. Heaven will already be my guarantee, but my eternal reward in that place will be determined as Jesus confronts me face to face over the careless and careful words and actions of my life. Are you living a life that prepares for that day?**

Read Job 22

You say, 'What does God know? Can He judge through the thick darkness? Job 22:13

When I started working for SEARS in college it seemed like a great job. One day of my training was spent with the loss prevention team leader. She took me to a room that was filled with cameras that showed all parts of the store. The person working the cameras explained what they are looking for. Often they'll see someone looking back and forth, or they keep walking to the same area repeatedly. I could tell that not only were they showing me how they catch shoplifters, but they wanted me to know that they were watching my every move.

Job is accused in this chapter of many things. One of those accusations was that Job was living his life as if God were far away. From what we have seen of Job and his faith, the charge appears baseless. Eliphaz seems just to be throwing out a bunch of charges and see if something makes Job feel guilty. While it seems unlikely that Job lived as if God was far off, how do you live? **Are you like the person in the store who thinks he's all alone, but you forget you're being watched? God's desire is not to catch you in some secret act and hold it over your head. His desire is that you'd leave secret acts behind. What have you been sneaking around with in your life? Have you needed a reminder that God is not far off from you or your circumstances?**

Read Job 23

Would He contend with me by the greatness of His power? No, surely He would pay attention to me. Job 23:6

I have never beaten my seven year-old son in football. We've played more times than I can count, but I never beat him. It would be easier if he didn't like telling people all the time that we played football and he won. I think people realize that if Tyler keeps winning, Dad must be pulling back a little. We play tackle, but I've never leveled him or

attempted to give him a concussion. He hits me as hard as he wants, and I let him because I know I can take it. But, when I'm about to put the game away, I always fumble or do something that allows him to squeak out a victory. One day he will realize that Dad was going easy on him.

As a father, I continue to understand the relationship between God and ourselves more. God has unlimited power which He can use as He pleases. But when God deals with the sin of His children, He never does so in the fullness or greatness of His power. His purpose is not to obliterate us, but to sanctify us into being more like Jesus Christ. Job and his friends were leveling some pretty big shots at God, but He can take it. God is patient with us. Just because we fall under discipline doesn't indicate God wasn't patient. **Think about how much more severely an all-powerful God would discipline you if He wanted. God has all power and authority and we need to live our lives in recognition of this fact. He has great plans for you, but are you resisting them? Choosing to be unrepentant of your sin indicates that you are resisting God's power and authority in your life. That is something you need to repent of as well.**

Read Job 24

The eye of the adulterer waits for the twilight, saying, 'No eye will see me.' And he disguises his face. Job 24:15

I enjoy watching COPS. I don't really know why, because so many times the subject matter is simply an officer finding a guilty person and the guilty person making up lame excuses as to why he's not guilty. The other common factor is that the show is usually a collection of events that happen at night. There are some crimes they handle during the day obviously, but the vast majority of serious crimes on that show happen after the sun goes down. It seems that criminals hope that the darkness will disguise them and prevent their capture.

As Job rails against people who do bad things and get away with it, he mentions the adulterer. The description is a person who waits for the darkness and then disguises his face as well. Why would he do these two things? Obviously so he won't be caught. And if he's worried about being caught, then he knows what he's doing is...wrong. **What are you trying to avoid being caught doing? What sin in your life are you attempting to disguise instead of defeat? A believer caught in sin is a terrible thing, but a believer who is attempting to disguise that sin so it can continue will pay consequences. Dr. Rogers used to say, "Sin takes you further than you want to go, keeps you longer than you want to stay, and costs you more than you want to pay." Is the price you have to pay worth the sin you are participating in?**

Read Job 25

How then can a man be just with God? Or how can he be clean who is born of woman? Job 25:4

If there ever was a man who married up, it's me. The first time I met my future wife, I immediately wrote off any chance of a having a relationship with her. She was way out of

my league in looks and loveliness so I figured I would have to settle elsewhere. But here I am, married to a woman I don't deserve. I often wonder if the mental disease that caused her to say yes at the altar, will strike her again one day in the future.

Bildad points out something that is pretty obvious in this short chapter; God is great and you are not. Why would a great God associate with a subpar human being? The main reason is because of His love. Even at our most disgusting times, God could not love us any more or any less. His perfect love is constantly extended to us. The Bible is clear that even from the moment we are born, we are imperfect. The original sin still descends on us from the mistake of Adam and Eve (that's why Jesus was born of a virgin, so that He would not be associated with that sin). **How can we know that God accepts us and loves us? Because He accepts and loves His Son, Jesus, and anyone who does likewise is a part of God's family. Sometimes it may seem like a daunting task to be loved by God, but He loves you and wants a closer relationship with you today than He had with you yesterday. Stop viewing love as fickle and fleeting as that of human "love" you see around you. And allow His love to be an example to you as you love others today!**

Read Job 26

He stretches out the north over empty space and hangs the earth on nothing.

Job 26:7

There are a common reasons that I find people believe in evolution and the big bang. The first one is that they don't believe in God and they want to live as they please. Secondly, there are people who truly believe after years of public school teaching, that evolution is true and there is abundant proof to support it. There is also a third group of people who claim to believe out of intimidation. They have been told that only stupid, ignorant, or backwards people would dismiss evolution. As a result, they attempt to reconcile evolution with God or dismiss creation altogether.

Job makes several statements here about the greatness of God and His creation. Here in verse 7, Job makes the significant statement that God hangs the earth on nothing. This is important because the Word of God is the only place this declaration was made at this time in history. Most people believed that the earth rode on the back of several different creatures, such as an elephant or snake. Others believed that a large man held it up on His shoulders. But, only the Word of God correctly tells us that the earth "hangs on nothing" as a result of the orbit that God has hung it in. **Do you find yourself somewhat intimidated to hold to the Word of God? The Bible has plenty of scientific and historical proofs to verify it more readily than any collegiate text book. Ask God to give you confidence in His Word. Pray that you will have the courage to stand for truth even when you're the only one. Study it and you will realize that there are many scientific truths that the Bible made clear before man ever deduced them.**

Read Job 27

For what is the hope of the godless when he is cut off, when God requires his life?

Job 27:8

In nearly every war, one of the first objectives is to cut off sections of enemy forces from the main force. In doing so, you cut off their supplies in order to quickly limit their effectiveness. It also cuts off communication to get updated orders and allows the enemy section to be more easily defeated. Even though supplies may be sufficient and orders haven't changed, simply knowing that a section has been cut off from the main body can be completely demoralizing.

In essence, every person who is ever born is cut off from the main body. Our sin from day one creates a separation between God and ourselves that we can never overcome on our own. Many people have tried, but all have failed. The godless can go to church, do good things, and even try to pray, but they are still cut off. God has provided Jesus Christ in order to reestablish communications with the lost, but they have to choose to accept that relationship. **Who have you shared the gospel with lately? Who do you know that is lost? Do you realize that they currently are living with no hope? If you did, wouldn't you tell them about Jesus before God requires their life? Faith is personal, and that's the reason we should be prepared to personally share it.**

Read Job 28

And to man He said, 'Behold, the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom; and to depart from evil is understanding.' Job 28:28

Brian Jackson went to jail for repeatedly pretending to be Pittsburgh Steeler football players. The most notable player that he impersonated was Steelers quarterback Ben Roethlisberger. There were a few problems with Jackson's impersonation. He is not 6' 5". He's not 23 years old. Oh yeah, and he doesn't look anything like Ben Roethlisberger. Jackson's first girlfriend totally believed him, until she saw Roethlisberger on TV and said to herself, "That doesn't look like my boyfriend." Jackson's story quickly fell apart due to a lack of evidence.

Job is talking about many of the great treasures that are out there for us. Two of the greatest are wisdom and knowledge. But, you don't have them just because you say you do; there must be some evidence. Job says the evidence for wisdom is "the fear of the Lord". This means that you have a respect and reverence for God. You're not quick or even willing to cast Him aside in your life. Job also says there is an evidence for understanding, which is that you "depart from evil". I'm not wise because I say I am, but as a result of my relationship with God. I don't have understanding because I say I do, but based on the actions I take. **Do you have wisdom? Does your relationship with God prove it? Who do you go to most for counsel? Dr. Phil? Parents? God? Do you have understanding in your life? What is the evidence? Are you fully aware that certain actions are dangerous or detrimental to your life, family, job, but you involved yourself in them anyway? Then you lack understanding. Ask God to give you wisdom and the understanding to use it.**

Read Job 29

I smiled on them when they did not believe, and the light of my face they did not cast down. Job 29:24

I recall counseling a married couple that was facing some pretty big challenges. I told them that one of the first steps to take was to start doing the little things in the marriage. She was upset because He never helped her with dishes or cleaning. He wanted her to let him have a little down time when he got off work. They talked about many other serious issues, but I told them that those big issues would have to wait for the little issues to be fixed. They came back a week later and I asked how they had done. Neither had worked on the small fixes and they were still complaining about the big ones. I didn't get discouraged, but just loved them. I gave them no new instructions and sent them home early. They couldn't fix their marriage by taking step two and ignoring step one.

Job was a very influential guy and a leader amongst his people. Many would come to him for counsel and he sat for long periods at a time and listened to them. Sometimes after giving his solutions, people wouldn't accept his counsel. Job didn't get angry with them and didn't allow their rejection of his words to cause him grief. He had done what he could and had to leave it at that. **How do you react when people reject your words? Do you immediately write them off as stupid? Maybe you need to re-evaluate the counsel you give. Are you answering too quickly and speaking more than thinking? I have had to deal with people rejecting my ideas, and I have to fight pride in thinking that I was right in the first place. Make your attempt to help people, but remember that they have to make their own decisions in the end.**

Read Job 30

Have I not wept for the one whose life is hard? Was not my soul grieved for the needy? Job 30:25

It doesn't take much to make me cry. I've always wished that it took more, because sometimes I find myself crying as a result of movies or conversations that really weren't all that upsetting to me. Recently we were watching a video in church for Operation Christmas Child, a ministry that sends Christmas presents around the world to children who might normally get nothing. At the end was a montage of pictures of these little kids getting their gifts and a tear-jerking song, and I just feel the waterworks roll. But, what if my tears were the only action that I took?

People sometimes aren't very nice. Many who knew Job were making fun of him for his trials. Job says when those people were going through trying times, he cried and had concern for them. But was that the end of his concern? Empathy doesn't meet the needs of people. Have you felt God leading you to minister to someone, but you didn't? Perhaps you weren't sure what to say, or if they would even want your help. People seem more disconnected from each other now than ever. Neighbors can live next to each other for years now without ever knowing the family next door. **What areas of your life is God**

leading you to action? Have you been ignoring Him? God ministers to people, but one of the cool parts of the process is that He uses people to minister to people. Go beyond tears and sympathy...show the love of Christ in your actions to someone who is hurting.

Read Job 31

That too would have been an iniquity calling for judgment, For I would have denied God above. Job 31:28

A father once took his young son out on the back porch and told him to stand on the railing. Then the dad stepped down into the yard and told his son to jump into his arms. The little guy refused for a long time, but finally the dad said, "I'll catch you", and his son took the leap. As the boy jumped, his father stepped back and let his son hit the ground. He picked his son up, dusted him off and dried his tears. "Let that be a lesson to you son. Don't trust anybody." Trust is a hard thing to have sometimes.

People, even earthly fathers, will fail us at times. God never will. Job was a man of great wealth. He was the Donald Trump of his day, but his money was in livestock instead of real estate. He says he didn't put his confidence in his gold or his wealth. Job knew that doing so would have been calling for judgment upon his life. Job knew that whether he had plenty or little, he had to place all of his trust in God. But I ask you, whom do you trust? I can tell you that my willingness to "trust" God has sometimes been affected by how much was in my checking account. It's easier to "trust" God when you have \$4,000 in the bank than when you have \$400. The problem is, I wasn't trusting God when times were good. My confidence was elsewhere, and so God removed that confidence. **Are you trusting God? If you're honest with yourself on that question, you probably already know the areas that you haven't trusted Him. You're talking to others more than God about that job decision. Your confidence is in doctors for the health of that family member, instead of in the Great Physician. Trust Him now. If you trusted Him to save you for eternity, it's time to start trusting Him to lead your mortal life.**

Read Job 32

So I say , 'Listen to me, I too will tell what I think.' Job 32:10

I served in a particular church for a couple of years, and as my time was ending I began to wonder what impact I had made. During my last evening there, several youth and adults got up during the service to tell how I had impacted their lives. I would estimate 95% of them mentioned that when they came to me with a question, I pulled out the Bible to show them the answer they needed. I don't tell this story to boast, but I was encouraged to know that the testimony of my ministry there was built on my reliance on the Bible. My hope was that if they saw me rely on the Bible for my answers, they would too.

Well now we have another man come on the scene, and he's a young guy. As a young guy myself, I'd like to think we have something to offer and bring to the table. However, do you know what people don't need? To simply hear your best opinion. When I ask someone a question about God, faith, salvation, or the Bible, I don't want to hear, "Well I

think...". I want to hear, "The Bible says...". This kid is happy to give his opinion, and later admits to being "full of words." That's never good, because you're more likely to spew than to speak. **Do you feel compelled to always share your opinion? On matters of faith, are your beliefs driven by what you think or what the Bible says? Our world needs more Christians who will turn to the Bible instead of their own brains when they're searching for answers.**

Read Job 33

I am pure, without transgression; I am innocent and there is no guilt in me. Job 33:9

I was listening to a sermon once and the pastor said a startling thing, "I stand in front of you with no sin." He didn't mean because Christ had washed him clean, but he was confident as he stood before us that there was no sin in him. I thought how great it was that he could make that claim until I realized that none of us can do it. There are times that I may lack deliberate sin in my life, but there is often still sin that I have not yet identified. This pastor displayed what I would call a self-righteous attitude.

This young man Elihu continues to talk in chapter 33. Someone really should have stopped him, but remember he said words were building up in him so he has a lot to say. In verse 9 he makes the statement that he is innocent and has no sin. Isn't that what Job has been saying? How come when Job claims to have been innocent in the disaster that fell upon him, no one believes him? Elihu thinks since he's not going through trials he must be right and Job must be wrong. As my Grandma Hall would say, "That's the pot calling the kettle black." **Have you claimed sinlessness in your life? Do you believe that you are living righteously and without sin? You're not. We fight against sin, but we will NEVER conquer it completely here on earth. There have been times I have been praying forgiveness for sin, but unable to think of any. That's not an indication of perfection, but of my blindness to sin that I had failed to identify in my life. Ask God today to show you your sin, and be prepared to deal with what you find.**

Read Job 34

For His eyes are upon the ways of a man, and He sees all his steps. Job 34:21

When I was a cleaning crew supervisor, my first few days were learning how to tell if someone had done their job. I would walk into these offices and think they looked pretty good. But my trainer would show me all the little ways to tell if anything beyond emptying trash had actually been done. In these large offices were smaller, executive offices that had plush carpeting. An employee might say he vacuumed, but if there were no lines on that carpeting then I knew he hadn't. And no matter how much you ring it out, a mop doesn't magically turn dry in a couple hours, so a dry mop indicated another task that hadn't been performed. The cleaning crews may have not seen the supervisors around, but we had ways of determining what had been done and what had not.

Elihu is still talking. In the midst of his verbal assault on Job, he does bring up an important point. God's eyes are on us and He can see all of our steps. Elihu is making the point that Job's actions have been seen by God, and that Job will have no opportunity to

argue with the Almighty. Job won't have reason since the ultimate source of his troubles was Satan and not God. But the point that Elihu is making is a valid one; God misses nothing. He doesn't take vacations and become ignorant of our actions. He is witnessing all our good and bad deeds. **How would your actions be different if you remembered God is watching you at all times? The point is not to make you feel that you are a prisoner, but to be a reminder to you as you attempt to live your life for God. Ask God to remind you that you're never alone, and to help you see the actions of your day through His eyes instead of through your own justification.**

Read Job 35

If you are righteous, what do you give to Him, or what does He receive from your hand? Job 35:7

In 1953, Ralph Kiner was proving himself to be one of the great hitters in major league baseball. That year, he had led the league again in home runs while playing for the Pittsburgh Pirates. So Kiner went to general manager, Branch Rickey, and told him that he wanted a raise. Rickey asked, "Where did we finish last year?" Kiner responded that the team had finished in last place. So Rickey responded, "Well, we can finish in last place without you." So they traded Kiner to the baseball purgatory known as the Chicago Cubs.

Sometimes we get like Kiner. We begin to think about how the team just couldn't get along without us. But they did. Pittsburgh had played ball before and they continued after Kiner left. In our walk with Christ, I think that over time we begin to forget that our righteousness comes from Him. I can't even take credit for the good works I do, because they are only possible through the change that Jesus has brought to my life. **Do you sometimes wonder how your church makes it when you're gone? Then you need to start re-evaluating your worth. Righteousness is a great gift, and it's not of ourselves but all of Him. Do you need to repent of pride over the good works you have done? Working for the Kingdom is great, but who were you really doing it for? God will never trade you, but He will certainly humble you.**

Read Job 36

But you were full of judgment on the wicked; judgment and justice take hold of you. Job 36:17

While serving a church, I met a young lady that I was able to lead to the Lord. She was living with her boyfriend, and I told some people in our church about what had happened. Several people claimed to know the boyfriend and said he had gone to our church in the past as a teenager. They felt that he was a waste of time because he had never chosen the right path before. Granted, the kid had made some mistakes, but these church-goers made the bigger mistake: expecting a lost person to act like he's saved. Don't we have enough of that going on in church already?

There is judgment for the wicked, but God will take care of that. Sometimes we get so indignant towards the sinful failings of others, that we feel a need to do something about

it right away. Christians are called to judge and challenge other Christians, not the lost. When a Christian is in sin, and we know about it, we have a responsibility to call them on it and help them overcome it. When a lost person is in sin, that's to be expected and we must share the gospel with them. **What have you been expecting out of lost people? Do you wish they would act saved? Do you see the eternal danger for them if they do? You need to learn to love people where they are, and approach them in their current season of life. Jesus never thought anyone was too far gone to save, and neither should we.**

Read Job 37

Listen to this, O Job, stand and consider the wonders of God. Job 37:14

Some of my favorite memories are from skiing in Colorado when I was a teenager. I had always heard people say that it's impossible to see the mountains and not realize there is a God. They have a point. Riding the lift chair up the mountain I could see beauty all around me. It seemed so unlikely that the beauty of that creation could be random, because randomness is rarely beautiful. I've never spilled a bunch of milk and then marveled at the beauty of my mess.

Elihu is pointing to the wonders of God in the physical world such as lightning and ice. But when we think of the wonders of God we shouldn't stop there. Have you considered the wonder of salvation? You had nothing to offer God, yet He offered His Son to you. What about the wonder of service? Even though God could accomplish every one of His plans without your help, He chooses to use you. **The longer we walk as Christians, the easier it is to forget how special God's wonders are. Take a moment today to thank Him for the many wonders He has performed in your life. Consider all that He has done for you, and do not forget.**

Read Job 38

Now gird up your loins like a man, and I will ask you, and you instruct Me! Job 38:3

I was in fifth grade and the lesson was so boring. It had something to do with writing sentences, so I chose to start talking to a friend next to me. After a few minutes, our teacher called on me to come forward. She said, "Since you seem to know this subject so well, why don't you teach it." She gave me her enormous teachers book, and then sat at her desk. I was so embarrassed, I was on the verge of tears. I looked at the book a moment, contemplated trying to teach it, and then admitted to her that I didn't know how. She took the book back, and told me to go have a seat. I sure learned my lesson that day...I mean about listening to the teacher, not about writing sentences correctly.

So during all these chapters of discussion, God has remained silent. When He speaks, He does so directly towards Job. Job's friends weren't giving the greatest counsel, but Job was still responsible for his own response. God says to "gird up your loins like a man". That would be the equivalent of us saying, "Hold on tight!" Literally, Job is being encouraged to brace himself. God is speaking, and Job needs to listen. God goes through His job description, and asks Job if there is one aspect of being God that Job could

handle. Without even answering, it's pretty clear that the answer is no. **What are you trying to handle that belongs to God? Are you trying to overcome sin on your own? You need the determination to do it, but the power of God for success. Are you seeking your own path instead of the one that God has set for you? You will never be successful in your life when you resist the plans of God. Remember that when you choose to ignore God, you are claiming yourself as God in your life. That's a dangerous choice to make.**

Read Job 39

She treats her young cruelly, as if *they* were not hers; though her labor be in vain, *she* is unconcerned Job 39:16

We were at a playground during the fall and my wife and I were helping our kids on the playground equipment. One of the things my kids love is a zipline that they ride by holding onto a handle. I had to help my kids get up on it, and when I turned around there were two other kids waiting for me to help them. I finally figured out who their mothers were, and they were totally unconcerned with their kids. Here was a strange man helping their kids reach and play on this zipline, and I don't think they ever noticed.

As God proves the extent of his knowledge, He makes mention of the ostrich. This bird simply lays its eggs on the ground, and then forgets about them. There is no concern for the safety of her children or any desire to take responsibility for them beyond laying the eggs. God is demonstrating that He is not an ostrich. He does not carelessly leave us lying about and unattended to. Whether in ease or difficulty, God is there, watching over us and concerned with everything we are going through. He was concerned when His Son was on the cross, but He didn't stop that. God will allow what is necessary, even if it causes difficulties in your life. **Do you feel abandoned? You're not. Just continue to seek out what God is trying to teach you through the trials. You're probably unwilling to abandon people in their hour of need. Remember how much more faithful God is than you and I. God notices you.**

Read Job 40

Once I have spoken, and I will not answer; even twice, and I will add nothing more. Job 40:5

Have you ever realized that you said too much? Ronald Reagan was preparing for a weekly radio address and was asked to give a mic check. Reagan said, "My fellow Americans, I'm pleased to tell you today that I have signed legislation that will outlaw Russia forever. We begin bombing in five minutes." It did not go out over the air, but was somehow discovered and reported on by a Japanese newspaper. As a result, the Soviet Far East Army was placed on alert and stayed that way for 30 minutes until it was realized the statement was a joke. I'm sure Reagan would have been more careful if he had known that Russia would take his words seriously.

Job has just listened to God tell Him about the role of the Almighty. Job says that he is insignificant and he puts his hand over his mouth. But then, for some reason he pulls his

hand back to make the statement of verse 5. Job is saying that he tried to explain himself, but since God didn't accept it, he'll be quiet. That's not an answer of submission. Job was still trying to justify the mistakes of his previous words. **Do you need to be quiet before God? Prayer is an important aspect of our relationship and growth with Jesus Christ. But, do you ever let Him get a word in edgewise? Today, commit that you will listen to the voice of the Holy Spirit as He speaks to you. Do not simply bring your requests before God, but listen to accept His requests for your life.**

Read Job 41

Behold , your expectation is false; Will you be laid low even at the sight of him?

Job 41:9

I spoke with a Major who led a tank battalion during the first Gulf War in Iraq during 1991. He said that as they came near to Baghdad, they knew there were Iraqi tanks that had been dug into the ground to provide cover and concealment. They knew where the tanks were thanks to satellite imagery that was given before they went out to engage the enemy. As his tanks approached, the Major stopped his men just out of range of the inferior Iraqi tanks. One of the U.S. tanks was decided on to fire the first shot and he put the round right on top of an Iraqi tank, completely destroying it. Soon, tank hatches were popping open all over the enemy area, with soldiers climbing out to surrender. It seems they had lost their will to fight after one shot.

God is demonstrating His power in His creation. This chapter helps establish that Job lived early on in history. The Leviathan that God describes is a whale-sized creature, but certainly not a whale. The description of armor, menacing teeth, and a host of other features seem to clearly identify this animal as some sort of ocean-dwelling dinosaur. Some bible scholars have called it a crocodile, but that seems like pretty big respect for an average sized creature. The big point is that if you were to take on the Leviathan, you would lose heart, and the battle, quickly. **What is God's lesson in this? That He is in control. The Leviathan may be uncontrollable for everyone on earth, but not for Him. Many lose heart in the face of a challenge, but for God there is no challenge. Trust Him today like never before. Remember that He has plans and desires for you, and your responsibility is to trust Him. I've learned to trust Him, because He has proven Himself trustworthy for the 20+ years that I've walked with Him.**

Read Job 42

The LORD restored the fortunes of Job when he prayed for his friends, and the LORD increased all that Job had twofold. Job 42:10

I loved watching the Cosby Show when I was growing up. One of my favorite lines comes from an episode when their daughter Vanessa gets caught wearing makeup without permission (the problems of the 90's were so much simpler). Vanessa's first response to her mother is, "I don't know what happened. All of sudden there was this stuff on my face. It was like temporary insanity!" Later on, her parents come in the room to give her punishment. Vanessa starts by saying, "I was wrong, I'm sorry, and I should

be punished." Her father responds with, "We know, we accept, and you will be." Excuses aren't what proves we have learned our lesson, but repentance is.

So Job finally repents before the Lord instead of offering up excuses. God accepts this from Job, and then tells Job's friends that they have sinned in their attempt to speak for God out of ignorance instead of by His leading. He tells them that they'll have to count on Job to offer up forgiveness for them. Job was acting as a mediator for these men. And when Job decides not to hold a grudge, but to pray for them, God restores everything that Job had lost and more. Job finally came to a point of saying God is God, and he is not. He was willing to admit he had been wrong in his actions towards God, and repented of them to declare he would never do it again. **What do you need to leave behind? What actions keep popping back up in your life that you say you want rid of? Perhaps your problem is that you're sorry for your sin, but you're not repentant. Are you willing to do anything to rid your life of the sin that plagues you? Then ask God for a solution of repentance and follow through as the Holy Spirit leads you to action.**